

Muriel Bowser

Muriel Elizabeth Bowser (/ˈboʊzər/; born August 2, 1972) is an American politician serving as the eighth Mayor of the District of Columbia (since 2015). A member of the Democratic Party, she previously represented Ward 4 as a member of the Council of the District of Columbia from 2007 to 2015. She is the second female Mayor of the District of Columbia after Sharon Pratt, and the first woman to be reelected to that position.

Elected to the Advisory Neighborhood Commission in 2004, Bowser was elected to the council in a special election in 2007, to succeed Adrian Fenty, who had been elected Mayor. She was reelected in 2008 and 2012 and ran for mayor in the 2014 election. She defeated incumbent mayor Vincent C. Gray in the Democratic primary and won the general election against three Independent and two minor party candidates with 55% of the vote. In 2018, she won a second term with 76% of the vote.

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Muriel Bowser



8th Mayor of the District of Columbia

Incumbent

Assumed office

January 2, 2015

Preceded by Vincent C. Gray

Member of the Council of the District of Columbia from Ward 4

In office

January 2, 2007 – January 2, 2015

Preceded by Adrian Fenty

Succeeded by Brandon Todd

Commissioner of the District of Columbia for district 4B09

In office

January 2, 2005 – January 2, 2007

Preceded by Sandra Battle

Succeeded by Douglass Sloan

Personal details

Born Muriel Elizabeth Bowser
August 2, 1972
Washington, D.C., U.S.

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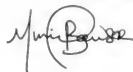
External links

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Education [Chatham University](#)
(BA)
[American University](#)
(MPP)

Signature



Early life and education

The youngest of six children of Joe and Joan Bowser,^[1] Bowser grew up in [North Michigan Park](#) in northeast D.C.^[2] In 1990, Bowser graduated from [Elizabeth Seton High School](#), a private all-girls Catholic high school located in [Bladensburg, Maryland](#).^{[3][4]} She received a college scholarship due to her above average grades.^[5] Bowser graduated from [Chatham College](#) in [Pittsburgh](#), Pennsylvania, with a bachelor's degree in history, and she graduated from the [American University School of Public Affairs](#) with a Masters in Public Policy.^[6] In 2015, she bought a home in [Colonial Village](#),^[7] moving from a [Riggs Park duplex](#)^[8] where she had lived since 2000.^[9] She is a lifelong Catholic.^[10] Bowser says she never envisioned herself as a politician or mayor, but possibly as an agency administrator.^[10]

Political career 2004–2014

Advisory Neighborhood Commission

Bowser began her political career in 2004, running unopposed for the Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC). She represented district 4B09, which includes the neighborhood of Riggs Park.^{[11][12][13]} She was unopposed again in 2006 when she ran for re-election.^[14]

Council of the District of Columbia

2007 election

Adrian Fenty, Member of the Council of the District of Columbia representing Ward 4, ran for Mayor of the District of Columbia. Bowser was his campaign coordinator for Ward 4.^[15] When Fenty was elected mayor in 2006, a special election was called to fill his council seat. Bowser, among many others, announced her candidacy for it.^[15]

During a political forum with 17 of the 19 council candidates in attendance, Bowser was the only candidate present who supported Fenty's proposed takeover of the District public school system, saying that the school system needed to change.^[16]

When Fenty announced his support of Bowser,^[17] some critics claimed that, if elected, she would always vote as Fenty wished, ignoring the needs of her constituents.^{[12][18]}

Other critics took note of developers who had contributed to Bowser's campaign, claiming she would favor developers over her constituents.^[19] While an ANC commissioner, Bowser had voted in favor of a zoning variance for a condominium development to be built by a developer who had contributed several hundred dollars to her campaign, which some critics derided as a conflict of interest.^[20] Bowser maintained that she had supported the development project before running for Council.^[19]

The editorial page of *The Washington Post* favored Bowser in the election.^[21] The local councils of the AFL-CIO, Service Employees International Union, and the Fraternal Order of Police also endorsed Bowser in the election, but the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees endorsed her opponent, Michael A. Brown.^{[22][23][24]}

Bowser won the special election with 40% of the vote.^[25]

2008 election

In 2008, Bowser announced her reelection campaign for the council. Three individuals ran against her in the Democratic primary,^[26] namely: Baruti Akil Jahi, former president of the Shepherd Park Citizens Association;^[27] Malik Mendenhall-Johnson, then serving as Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner of 4B04;^[28] and Paul E. Montague, who had been Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner of 4B07 before being recalled in 2004.^[29] Both Jahi and Mendenhall-Johnson criticized Bowser, saying she was a rubber stamp for Mayor Fenty and that she was unconcerned with her constituents' needs.^[30]

No candidates' names were on the ballot for the Republican or D.C. Statehood Green primaries.^[26]

The Washington Post's editorial department endorsed Bowser's candidacy.^[31] The Gertrude Stein Democratic Club also voted to endorse Bowser's reelection.^[32]



Bowser's official Council photo.

Bowser won the Democratic Party primary election, receiving 75 percent of votes.^[33] Jahi received 19%, Montague received 3%, and Mendenhall-Johnson received 2%.^[33] With no one else appearing on the subsequent general election ballot,^[34] Bowser won the general election with 97 percent of the vote.^[35]

In 2011, Bowser was appointed to the Washington Metropolitan Area Transportation Authority board of governors, a position she held until 2015.^{[36][37][38]}

2012 election

Bowser ran for reelection in 2012.^[39] Bowser said she would not turn down donations from corporations.^[39] Candidate Max Skolnik criticized Bowser for receiving campaign contributions from developers, corporate bundlers, and lobbyists, saying that Bowser would favor the interests of these corporate donors.^[39] Bowser said she was not in favor of banning corporations from making political donations altogether, saying that doing so would make it more difficult to track where campaign donations come from.^[39] She also said that corporations are banned from donating to federal elections, but that corporations still find ways to give to campaigns.^[40]

Bowser's candidacy was endorsed by the editorial boards of *The Washington Post*^[41] and the *Washington City Paper*.^[42]

Bowser won the Democratic primary with 66% of the vote, to Renee L. Bowser's (no relation) 13%, Max Skolnik's 9%, Baruti Jahi's 5%, Judi Jones' 3%, and Calvin Gurley's 2%.^[43] Unopposed in the general election,^[44] she was elected with 97% of the vote.^[45]

2014 election

On March 23, 2013, Bowser announced that she would run for Mayor of the District of Columbia in the 2014 election.^[46] Her campaign's chair was former council member William Lightfoot.^[47]

Bowser emphasized that she can connect with longtime residents concerned about the rapid changes occurring in the District, while still celebrating the changes that had occurred.^[48] Bowser disdained business-as-usual and corruption in the District's government.^[48] She favored free Metro fares for students.^[49] She was against increasing for the minimum wage only for employees of large retailers.^[50] Bowser was criticized for being too inexperienced for the position,^[48] with too few legislative accomplishments while on the council,^[51] and for having a platform that was short on details.^[52] She limited the number of debates by only agreeing to participate after the field of candidates had been set, which postponed the first debate until August.^[53]

Bowser was endorsed by EMILY's List^[54] and the editorial board of *The Washington Post*.^[55] She won the Democratic mayoral primary election with 43 percent of the vote.^[56] To raise funds for her campaign she accepted contributions in excess of legal limits, for which she was fined after winning the election.^[57]

In the general election, Bowser was on the ballot with Independents David Catania, Nestor Djonkam and Carol Schwartz, D.C. Statehood Green Faith Dane and Libertarian Bruce Majors. No Republican filed.^[58] Bowser won the election with 80,824 votes (54.53%) to Catania's 35% and Schwartz's 7%, and took office on January 2, 2015.^[59]

Mayor of the District of Columbia

Animal control

In 2017, Bowser proposed several animal regulations, including a ban on backyard chickens, a requirement that all cats be licensed, and a provision that seemed to outlaw leaving dog feces in private yards for more than 24 hours.^[60] Following public backlash, the City Administrator clarified that "this is not a war on pets" and the proposals were withdrawn.^[60] Later the same year, the Department of Health began to enforce an existing law banning dogs from outdoor bar patios.^[61] Following public objections, the D.C. Council changed the law to allow business owners to decide whether or not to allow dogs.^[62]

Arts and culture

Asserting legal authority that was questioned by the D.C. Council, in 2019 Bowser illegally took control of the art collection owned by the D.C. Commission on the Arts and Humanities and sought to bring the organization under her control.^[63] Bowser's power struggle saw staff of the Commission locked out of their jobs without warning.^[64] Bowser used her third ever veto to block legislation that would have preserved the independence of the organization, which also provides grants to hundreds of artists.^[65]

Autonomous vehicles

In February 2018, Bowser announced the formation of a work group, with members drawn from various agencies, to explore the benefits of, and prepare the District for, autonomous vehicle technology. The city and the Southwest Business Improvement District are also exploring possibilities for a pilot shuttle program along 10th Street, S.W., possibly to supplement an existing service that connects visitors to popular District destinations. A "Request for Information" was released to firms with expertise in autonomous vehicle development.^[66]

Budgeting

Bowser released the first budget of her second term in March 2019. The budget increased spending by 8.2% though revenue growth was expected around three percent. D.C. Auditor Kathy Patterson said the budget was not sustainable and fiscally irresponsible. Bowser responded by hailing her plan to make the DC Circulator free of charge.^{[67][68]}

On multiple occasions, D.C. government agencies under Bowser's authority and led by her appointees lost millions in federal money because deadlines were missed. Over the course of Bowser's first administration, the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development offered the D.C. Department of Housing and Community Development millions for lead remediation of its aging housing supply. The DHCD target of remediating lead paint in 225 homes was not met, federal grant money was not spent, and eventually the program closed.^[69]

In 2019, local organizations providing assistance to at risk populations missed out in \$3.75 million when the responsible D.C. Government body failed to submit a timely application. Eleanor Holmes Norton and other D.C. officials pleaded with federal authorities to grant D.C. leniency so that local programs including Reading Partners D.C., The Literacy Lab, and City Year D.C. could receive funding.^[70]

Campaign finance

In 2015, Bowser's allies formed FreshPAC, a political action committee intended to advance her agenda.^[71] The initiative was the first PAC in District politics so closely aligned with a sitting mayor and created by a former campaign treasurer. Thanks to a legislative loophole regulating off-year fundraising, FreshPAC accepted unlimited contributions. Bowser supporters had quickly raised more than \$300,000 and had a goal of collecting \$1 million by year's end.^{[71][72]} FreshPAC was chaired by Earle "Chico" Horton III, a lobbyist for a major corporation that sought Bowser's support.^[73] Many of the highest donors participated in a trip to China with the mayor.^[74] Following outcry from the *Washington Post*, members of the D.C. Council, and other stakeholders, FreshPAC was shut down in November 2015.^[72] Bowser said she thought FreshPAC was a good thing but its message was distorted.^[75]

In 2017, the D.C. Office of Campaign Finance fined Bowser's campaign committee \$13,000 for accepting contributions beyond legal maximums during her 2014 mayoral campaign. The excess contributions totaled more than \$11,000 from more than a dozen developers and contractors, as well as from landlord Sanford Capital, whom the Bowser administration had been slow to fine despite being responsible for more than 1,000 housing code violations. Some of the same contributors later contributed to FreshPAC. Bowser's campaign returned the illegal contributions.^[57]

In 2018, the D.C. Council unanimously passed campaign finance legislation that sought to remove the influence of developers and other large donors from politics by publicly financing campaigns.^{[76][77]} Bowser was staunchly opposed to the act and said that she would not provide financing for implementation of the law.^{[76][77]}

Contracting

In 2016, the head of D.C.'s Department of General Services resigned and contracting officials were fired following the award of a large construction project.^[78] One of the fired employees filed a \$10 million whistleblower lawsuit alleging that he had been terminated for the failure to channel contracts to Fort Myer Construction, a major Bowser campaign donor; the other made similar allegations in an administrative proceeding. The episode prompted an investigation by Councilmember Mary Cheh. In 2017, Cheh's report found that in addition to the questionable firings, a city employee had illegally shared confidential information with Fort Myer about a competitor's bid on a separate project. The report found that the D.C. City Administrator - the top Bowser appointed official - had urged quick settlement of unresolved contract disputes with Fort Myer in an attempt to appease it. These actions led to a \$4 million in payouts to the firm, an outcome that the District has previously opposed.^[79] After fighting unsuccessfully to keep the findings from public view, Bowser refused to comment on any of the points in the report.^[80]

Crime

During her first year as mayor, the district saw a 40% increase in homicides.^[81] Bowser sought to address the spike by proposing legislation allowing law enforcement officials to perform warrantless searches of violent ex-offenders. The bill was widely opposed by citizen's groups and the D.C. Council, and did not pass.^[81]

In 2016, District homicides fell by 17%, to 135,^[82] and dropped again in 2017 to 116, or about the same level prior to a 2015 spike.^{[83][84]} There were 160 homicides in 2018, an increase of 40 percent from the previous year and the most since 2015.^{[85][86]} Murders continued to rise in 2019, and by September 19, the homicide rate in the District reached 125, a 17 percent increase from the previous year.^[87]

Development

In February 2015, Bowser cancelled the creation of a public facility for art exhibitions, lectures and educational activities by the Institute for Contemporary Expression. Approved by Gray, the project involved a privately funded conversion of the historic but unused Franklin School and had its first event planned for September 2015.^{[88][89]} Bowser cited financial concerns for the decision, but critics noted that several of the firms who earlier competed unsuccessfully for the property were among her donors.^[88] As of October 2015, proposals were still being considered.^[90]

In September 2015, Bowser announced a deal with Monumental Sports owner Ted Leonsis to build a practice facility for the Washington Wizards.^[91] Under the deal, District taxpayers would pay 90 percent of the estimated \$55 million cost.^[91] The government's portion was split between direct government expenditure and Events DC, a D.C.-government-funded body which operates with an independent board.^[92] In July 2016, before construction had started, it was announced that costs would exceed estimates by \$10 million while the number of seats in the facility would likely decrease.^[93] Under the agreement with the developer, the District will be responsible for cost overruns.^[94] Once the St. Elizabeths East Entertainment and Sports Arena was completed, operations costs exceeded estimates and the Events DC board approved more than \$1 million in additional costs to cover the shortfall.^[95] A contract for a firm to find naming rights for the facility was funded at \$180,000 per year.^[95]

In May 2019, the D.C. auditor found that the Housing Production Trust Fund, which gives developers funding for affordable housing, had awarded funding to proposals that scored poorly and in one case received the lowest score. The successful but low rated projects were all proposed by developers who had made contributions to the mayor's campaign.^[96]

Education

In 2015, D.C. Public Schools Chancellor Kaya Henderson routinely bent or broke school placement rules to give preferential treatment to well-connected parents seeking prized enrollments at particular D.C. public schools. Two senior Bowser appointees were among seven parents who benefited from Henderson's misuse of authority by being permitted to bypass the competitive DCPS lottery system.^[97] Deputy Mayor Courtney Snowden, who makes \$196,000 a year, jumped a waitlist of more than 1000 names to enroll her child.^[98] In 2018, it was revealed that Bowser's recently appointed Schools chancellor Antwan Wilson had similarly manipulated the system to transfer Wilson's teenage daughter to a preferred school. Wilson and other staff resigned while Bowser refused a request to testify about Wilson's statement that she was aware of the placement, calling an inquiry "political circus."^[99] By 2018, management of D.C. Public Schools prompted investigation by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the U.S. Department of Education and the D.C. Office of the Inspector General.^[100]

Emergency services

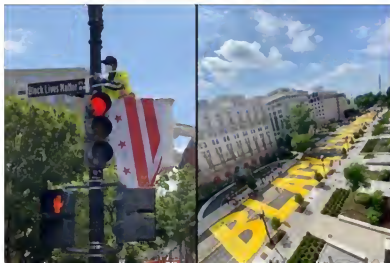
In February 2016, Bowser's appointee as medical director of the fire department resigned from her post after one year on the job. Explaining her decision, Juliette Saussy said that she could not be complicit in a failed agency and that its performance was putting Washingtonian's lives at risk. In response, Bowser's spokesperson said that she was committed to achieving change.^[101]

Environment

In January 2018, Bowser announced a \$4.7 million investment in two islands in the Anacostia River, 45 acre Kingman Island and 5 acre Heritage Island. She also designated portions of each island as a "state conservation area," which restricts their use to limited purposes including recreation and education. The funds will be used for improvements to the islands, including outdoor classrooms, walkways, a floating lab platform and bathrooms.^[102]

George Floyd protests

Mayor Bowser demonstrated support for the Black Lives Matter movement following the killing of George Floyd and the subsequent protests. She renamed the stretch of 16th Street NW in front of the White House, "Black Lives Matter Plaza" and had a mural painted spanning the entire street.^[103] DC-based leaders of Black Lives Matter said the act was a distraction from real policy changes and called on the Mayor to defund the police.^[103] In response, Black Lives Matter organizers painted "DEFUND THE POLICE" in the same bright letters, feet away from the mural Bowser ordered.^[104]



Street Signs and Monument dedicated to Black Lives Matter.

Government transparency

In early 2018, the members of the D.C. Board of Ethics and Government Accountability voted unanimously not to renew the contract of Traci Hughes, head of D.C.'s government transparency entity, the Office of Open Government. Activists said Hughes was being punished for her enforcement of District regulations on government transparency. In the preceding year, she had faulted at least two public boards controlled by Bowser appointees for failure to comply with the city's Open Meetings Act, and had issued a decision that the board of United Medical Center, the District's troubled public hospital, had broken that law by secretly discussing and voting to close the facility's nursery and delivery rooms.^[105] Hughes said after her dismissal that she had had to resist pressure to ease off in her role of policing District agencies' compliance with the Open Meetings Act and Freedom of Information Act; and that she had been subjected to "personal attacks in an effort to keep [her] from issuing an opinion" relating to Open Meetings Act compliance by the D.C. Commission on Selection and Tenure of Administrative Law Judges.^[106]

Gun control

Bowser is a strong advocate of gun control, characterizing herself in her Inaugural Speech in January 2015 as "a mayor who hates guns."^[107] Bowser has encouraged the D.C. Council to ban bump stocks, with the aim of forcing congressional Republicans to take a stand on the record on gun control and gun violence.^[108] Bowser was also "unusually supportive" of the March for Our Lives rally in Washington, D.C. in March 2018, and is said to be positioning herself as a national figure in the gun control movement.^[109]

Health care

In 2016, United Medical Center was the sole government-owned hospital in D.C. In March of that year, on the advice of the Director of Health Care Finance, the D.C Council awarded the management of UMC to Veritas, a two-year-old politically connected firm.^[110] The husband of the Veritas CEO was a major donor to the Bowser campaign in 2014, and a longtime health-care executive with experience overseeing troubled hospitals.^[111] Veritas however failed to improve the quality of care and its tenure saw several cases of preventable patient deaths and negligence. By March 2017, the director of D.C.'s Department of Health was warning the UMC board about serious safety lapses in the hospital's obstetrics unit. By August, the Department of Health had shut down the ward due to its failure to meet minimum standards.^{[112][113]} Earlier, in July 2017, the hospital allowed a week to pass between the death of a nursing home patient and notification to his family. In August, another patient died under questionable circumstances. In September, the nurses union voted "no confidence" in the hospital's leadership and said that unsafe nurse-patient ratios and a lack of proper equipment were unaddressed.^[114] Bowser administration officials refused repeated requests to disclose the specific medical lapses and ultimately the Council voted to remove Veritas.^[115]

The opioid epidemic ravaged D.C., with a higher rate of fatal overdoses in 2017 among African Americans in D.C. than whites in West Virginia or New Hampshire. Though funding was available, the Department of Behavioral Health failed to establish adequate treatment programs.^[116] In December 2018, the District announced an "ambitious" plan aiming to cut opioid deaths by half within about two years, using a combination of treatment, tracking and education. The plan was written by a "group of D.C. agencies, doctors, substance abuse treatment providers, council members and individuals in recovery." Several of the plan's recommendations were described as "vague," or merely expanding on existing programs.^{[117][118]}

Upon taking office in 2015, Bowser set a goal to halve the number of HIV/AIDS cases in the District by 2020. In 2019, the District continued to have one of the highest rates in the country. The number of diagnoses in the previous year was 360, decreasing by 13 and 5 during each of the previous two years of Bowser's term.^[119]

Homelessness

Bowser pledged to end chronic homelessness in the District.^[120] In 2018, the results of an annual survey required by federal law reflected a 7.6% drop in the homeless population from 2017, following a 17.3% drop the year before. The estimated total homeless population of 6,904 was, however, still slightly higher than it had been in 2013.^[121]

Bowser's approach to resolving the homelessness issue, focusing on homeless families, has been the subject of criticism. During the winter of 2015, the District saw an increase of more than 250 percent over any previous year, in homeless families housed in shelters and overflow motel rooms, although part of the increase was due to the administration's decision to move families into motel rooms before freezing temperatures would require it do so under the law.^[120] In February 2016, Bowser unveiled a plan to provide housing for homeless families following the closure of District of Columbia General Hospital.^[122] Without any community consultation or input, Bowser announced the location of one shelter in each of the District's eight wards and refused to say how the sites were selected.^{[122][123][124]} In March 2016, it was revealed that many of the sites selected were connected to Bowser's contributors.^[125] Under Bowser's plan, the monthly cost per unit was \$4,500 on average each year for at least the next 20 years.^[125] Frustrated by the D.C. Council's efforts to devise its own plan, Bowser lashed out with expletives at Chairman Phil Mendelson.^{[126][127]}

Housing oversight

In 2018, Bowser nominated Joshua Lopez, former chief campaign aide to both Bowser and ex-Mayor Adrian Fenty, to serve on the board the D.C. Housing Authority, which reviews contracts and sets policy for public housing. Over the objections of certain council members who considered Lopez unqualified for the position, Bowser proceeded with the nomination, which the Council approved by a vote of 10–3.^[128] In April 2018, Lopez held a loudspeaker at a rally while a representative of the Nation of Islam spoke, calling Councilmember Elissa Silverman "a fake jew." Bowser called upon Lopez to apologize but resisted public calls for his resignation.^{[129][130]}

Immigration

Upon the election of Donald Trump to the presidency, and following statements by the President-elect threatening to pull federal funding from sanctuary cities, Bowser issued a statement reaffirming the District's status as a sanctuary city.^[131] Soon thereafter Bowser was confronted by a throng of about 100 protesters who were angry that she had not responded more forcefully—as had mayors of some other sanctuary cities—in denouncing Trump's policies and in defending immigrants.^{[132][133][134]} In January 2017, following Trump's inauguration and the issuance of a Presidential Executive Order threatening to withhold Federal funding from sanctuary cities, Bowser affirmed that the District would maintain its status as such.^[135]

In November 2017, Bowser announced that the District was joining seven other cities in a partnership with the National Immigration Forum to assist some 2,000 green card holders who work for the D.C. Government, as well as family members, in applying for U.S. citizenship. The partnership would provide information, legal help, citizenship test coaching and assist in finding language classes. Participation in the program could save an applicant as much as \$2,000 in legal fees.^[136]

Public services

In January 2016, traffic throughout the D.C. region was paralyzed by an inch of snow on untreated roads.^{[137][138]} More than 1,000 accidents were reported and some commuters abandoned their cars amidst impassable roads.^{[137][138]} Bowser apologized for an inadequate response in the District, explaining that "we should have been there earlier."^[138]

For a larger storm later in the same season, a report by the D.C. auditor found that the District had spent over \$40 million on removal, much of it charged to the District's credit cards.^[139] The District incurred tens of thousands of dollars in credit card fees. In an unprecedented move, JPMorgan Chase shut off the government's line of credit until some of the card balances could be paid. Some of the contractors who benefited most from the snow removal expenses were important Bowser donors, the D.C. auditor found.^[139]

Public utilities

In October 2015, Bowser changed her position to support the \$6.4-billion merger between two public utilities, Exelon and Pepco. Opponents of the merger decried the lack of transparency in the deal and Bowser's reversal.^[140] Community activists raised ethics concerns, claiming that Bowser was swayed by

a \$25 million pledge to rename the future MLS Soccer Stadium as Pepco Park.^[141] In December 2015, it was revealed that Exelon had paid the chairman of FreshPAC, a political action committee affiliated with Bowser's allies, as a lobbyist.^[142]

Sexual harassment

In December 2017, Bowser ordered that 30,000 employees of the District receive sexual harassment training by February 2018. Under the order, 1,500 supervisors must also complete advanced, in-person training.^[143] At the time, Bowser administration personnel could not say how much taxpayers had paid to resolve sexual harassment claims against the city, or how many such claims there had been. In March 2018, it was reported that taxpayers had recently spent at least \$735,000 to settle such suits. Bowser's aides acknowledged they did not have a full grasp of the problem, and the city plans to set up a system to track complaints and settlements.^[144]

Traffic safety

In 2015, Bowser announced *Vision Zero*, a traffic safety initiative that aims to eliminate all traffic fatalities by 2024. To launch the event, Bowser, supporters, and D.C. government employees stood at intersections and waved green signs imploring motorists to slow down.^[145] The following year, the number of traffic fatalities increased from 26 to 28 and the number of crash injuries increased from 12,122 to 12,430. Pedestrian fatalities within the total dropped from 15 to 9, during a period when pedestrian deaths nationally had jumped upward by 11 percent.^[146] In 2017, traffic fatalities continued to rise.^[147] Following a pair of biking fatalities in the summer of 2018, cyclists protested that Bowser had failed at promoting traffic safety.^[148] In 2019, a prominent bike advocate was struck and killed by a driver along a stretch of road that was known to be dangerous.^[149]

In May 2020, Bowser announced that the default speed limits in D.C. would be reduced to 20 M.P.H., claiming that "slower speeds can help improve safety".^[150]

Transportation

As part of her first State of the District Address in March 2015, Bowser promised to get the DC Streetcar "up and running." In September, Bowser as well as the director of the D.C. Department of Transportation promised that the streetcar would be operational by the end of the year.^{[151][152]} The H Street/Benning line eventually began public service operations on February 27, 2016.^{[153][154]}

Urban development

After Bowser took office in 2015, she created a new cabinet post to focus on development in the city's poorest areas. She named former Council candidate Courtney Snowden to the new position.^[155] In 2017, the Inspector General found that Snowden had improperly used city employees to care for her child.^[156] Bowser said that appropriate management action had been taken in response to staff babysitting, without specifying what was done.^[157]

In October 2017, Bowser announced a \$3 million infusion into housing and retail projects in D.C. Wards 7 and 8 in an effort to remedy the scarcity of grocery stores in the District's poorest wards.^[158] District Wards 7 and 8 have only three grocery stores between them, or 50,000 people for every grocery store,

compared to 10,000 per store in wealthy Ward 3.^[159] Bowser awarded \$2.1 million to the Jair Lynch group for redevelopment of a shopping center, and \$880,000 to South Capitol Affordable Housing to assist in building out the Good Food Markets project, which also includes 195 units of affordable housing as well as commercial space. Previous attempts to attract grocery stores to these areas have failed.^[158]

Youth services

In April 2016, the D.C. Trust, a government-funded entity that disbursed grants throughout the District to non-profits providing youth services, declared bankruptcy and announced plans to dissolve. The decision was attributed in part to overspending by and for staff at the agency.^{[160][161]} The agency, also known as the City Youth Investment Trust Corp., had suffered a history of abuse and mismanagement.^[162] Former councilmember Harry Thomas, Jr. was found guilty on felony charges for embezzling \$350,000 of the trust's funds between 2007 and 2009. In 2013, Congressional investigators concluded that the agency lacked controls to properly administer a \$20 million-a-year, federally funded school-voucher program. Then in January 2016, the agency's board, four of whom had been appointed by Mayor Bowser, learned that a former executive director and a former senior financial officer had used funds to pay tens of thousands of dollars in credit-card charges, including some for personal use. Bowser had recently provided \$700,000 in taxpayer funding to the agency. The board members did not know how much of the funding remained or how youth services could be continued.^[160]

In 2019, a 9 year old and a 10 year old were handcuffed by the Metropolitan Police Department in separate incidents, sparking public outrage after videos of the incidents were circulated. While the Attorney General said that he would review department policies, Bowser said that "every case is different" and asked whether it was appropriate to circulate photos of juveniles.^{[163][164]}

Other positions

Bowser supports the outfitting of Metropolitan Police Department with body cameras and has requested \$6 million in her 2016 budget proposal to complete the task. Her proposal includes a provision that would make all footage from the cameras exempt from Freedom of Information Act requests, with the goal "to respect privacy."^{[165][166][167]}

2018 election

Bowser filed to run for reelection in 2018.^[168] James Butler, Ernest E. Johnson, and Jeremiah D. Stanback filed to run against her in the Democratic Party primary election.^[168] Ann C. Wilcox filed to run as a D.C. Statehood Green Party candidate.^[169] No one filed as a mayoral candidate in either the Republican Party primary election or the Libertarian Party primary election.^{[170][171]} Noting the nominal opposition and some "stumbles" during her first term, *The Washington Post* endorsed Bowser's reelection, citing the District's economic prosperity and Bowser's having fulfilled her promise to restore integrity to government.^[172] She then won the June 19 Democratic Primary with 83% of the vote, after her most formidable potential challenger, former mayor Vincent C. Gray, declined to enter the race.^{[173][174][175]} She went on to win the November 8 general election with just under 80% of the vote against two Independent candidates and one Libertarian.^[176]

During the election, Bowser sought to unseat incumbent Councilmember Elissa Silverman, who had frequently questioned the mayor. Bowser endorsed political newcomer Dionne Reeder and provided her with volunteer and fundraising support. Reeder lost by a significant margin and Bowser was not able to

deliver a victory in her home base of Ward 4.^[177]

Electoral history

2004

2004 Advisory Neighborhood Commission, 4B09, general election ^[11]				
Party		Candidate	Votes	%
	Democratic	Muriel E. Bowser	966	98
		write-in	22	2

2006

2006 Advisory Neighborhood Commission, 4B09, general election ^[14]				
Party		Candidate	Votes	%
	Democratic	Muriel E. Bowser	601	90
		write-in	70	10

2007

2007 Council of the District of Columbia, Ward 4, special election ^[25]				
Party		Candidate	Votes	%
	Democratic	Muriel Bowser	5,064	40
	<u>Democratic</u>	Michael A. Brown	3,433	27
	<u>Democratic</u>	Charles Gaither	683	5
	<u>Democratic</u>	Dwight E. Singleton	602	5
	<u>D.C. Statehood Green</u>	Renee Bowser	583	5
	<u>Democratic</u>	Graylan Scott Hagler	468	4
	<u>Democratic</u>	Tony Towns	390	3
	<u>Democratic</u>	Robert G. Childs	339	3
	<u>Democratic</u>	Artee Milligan	170	1
	<u>Independent</u>	Judi Jones	154	1
	<u>Democratic</u>	Carroll Green	117	1
	<u>Democratic</u>	Lisa P. Bass	110	1
	<u>Democratic</u>	Douglas Ned Sloan	98	1
	<u>Democratic</u>	Marlena D. Edwards	97	1
	<u>Democratic</u>	T. A. Uqdah	82	1
	<u>Democratic</u>	Lisa Comfort Bradford	72	1
	<u>Democratic</u>	Michael T. Green	49	0
	<u>Democratic</u>	James Clark	17	0
	<u>Democratic</u>	Roy Howell	10	0
		write-in	29	0

2008

2008 Council of the District of Columbia, Ward 4, Democratic Party primary election ^[33]				
Party		Candidate	Votes	%
	Democratic	Muriel Bowser	7,132	75
	<u>Democratic</u>	Baruti Jahi	1,800	19
	<u>Democratic</u>	Paul E. Montague	302	3
	<u>Democratic</u>	Malik F. Mendenhall-Johnson	236	2
		write-in	58	1

2008 Council of the District of Columbia, Ward 4, general election ^[35]				
Party		Candidate	Votes	%
	Democratic	Muriel Bowser	30,888	97
		write-in	936	3

2012

2012 Council of the District of Columbia, Ward 4, Democratic Party primary election ^[43]				
Party		Candidate	Votes	%
	Democratic	Muriel Bowser	7,541	66
	Democratic	Renee L. Bowser	1,523	13
	Democratic	Max Skolnik	1,042	9
	Democratic	Baruti Jahi	619	5
	Democratic	Judi Jones	371	3
	Democratic	Calvin Gurley	268	2
		write-in	32	0

2012 Council of the District of Columbia, Ward 4, general election ^[45]				
Party		Candidate	Votes	%
	Democratic	Muriel Bowser	33,045	97
		write-in	933	3

2014

2014 Mayor of the District of Columbia, Democratic Party primary election ^[178]				
Party		Candidate	Votes	%
	Democratic	Muriel E. Bowser	42,045	43
	Democratic	Vincent C. Gray	31,613	33
	Democratic	Tommy Wells	12,393	13
	Democratic	Jack Evans	4,877	5
	Democratic	Andy Shallal	3,196	3
	Democratic	Vincent Orange	1,946	2
	Democratic	Reta Lewis	490	1
	Democratic	Carlos Allen	120	0
		write-in	235	0

2014 Mayor of the District of Columbia, general election ^[179]				
Party		Candidate	Votes	%
	Democratic	Muriel E. Bowser	88,439	54
	<u>Independent</u>	David A. Catania	57,375	35
	<u>Independent</u>	Carol Schwartz	11,625	7
	<u>D.C. Statehood Green</u>	Faith Dane	1,348	1
	<u>Libertarian</u>	Bruce Majors	1,164	1
	<u>Independent</u>	Nestor Djonkam	421	0
		write-in	1,493	1

2018

2018 Mayor of the District of Columbia, Democratic Party primary election ^[180]				
Party		Candidate	Votes	%
	Democratic	Muriel Bowser (incumbent)	58,431	80
	<u>Democratic</u>	James Butler	7,532	10
	<u>Democratic</u>	Ernest E. Johnson	4,444	6
	<u>Democratic</u>	<u>Write-in</u>	2,787	4
Total votes				100

Washington, D.C. mayoral election, 2018 ^[181]				
Party		Candidate	Votes	%
	Democratic	Muriel Bowser	162,199	80
	<u>D.C. Statehood Green</u>	Ann Wilcox	19,979	10
	<u>Independent</u>	Dustin Canter	14,783	7
	<u>Libertarian</u>	Martin Moulton	7,152	3
Total votes			204,113	100

Personal life

Bowser has never married. In May 2018, she announced that she had adopted a baby.^[182]

See also

- List of mayors of the 50 largest cities in the United States
- List of female governors in the United States

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External links

- Campaign website (<http://murielformayor.com/>)
- Official site (<http://mayor.dc.gov/>)
- Appearances (<https://www.c-span.org/person/?murielbowser>) on C-SPAN

Council of the District of Columbia		
Preceded by Adrian Fenty	Member of the Council of the District of Columbia from Ward 4 2007–2015	Succeeded by Brandon Todd
Party political offices		
Preceded by Vincent Gray	Democratic nominee for Mayor of the District of Columbia 2014, 2018	Most recent
Political offices		
Preceded by Vincent Gray	Mayor of the District of Columbia 2015–present	Incumbent

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